3
LEVEL

Aqeedah

Islamic Creed

العبيكان للتعليم
Obeikan Education

ENGLISH EDITION

Aqeedah

Islamic Creed

Level 3

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Preface

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and blessings and peace be upon the noblest of the Prophets and Messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, and upon all his family and Companions. To proceed:

Islamic knowledge is one of the most important necessities that the Muslim needs in his life; the entire ummah, in its efforts to rebuild Islamic civilization, is in need of it. Hence the religious texts point out the importance of Islamic knowledge and its bearers. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge - [that He is] maintaining [creation] in justice. There is no deity except Him, the Exalted in Might, the Wise}* [Aal Imran 3:18]. Ash-Shawkani رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ said: What is meant by those of knowledge here is the scholars of the Quran and Sunnah. And Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{and say, "My Lord, increase me in knowledge"}* [Ta-Ha 20:114].

In the hadith it says: **«Whoever follows a path seeking knowledge thereby, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise.»** Narrated by Muslim.

This series of textbooks comes to serve the community, with the aim of conveying Islamic knowledge by various methods and making it readily available to those who seek it. We hope that it will be another source of knowledge for academic programs and that it will be a support and help to those who want to acquire more Islamic knowledge and education, in an effort to achieve the main goal, which is to spread and instill sound Islamic knowledge on a sound academic foundation and in accordance with correct beliefs, based on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, in a modern and easily-understood style. We ask Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ to grant us all beneficial knowledge, enable us to do righteous deeds, guide us and help us to be sincere in our efforts.

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The Zad
Academy Series

Aqeedah
Islamic Creed
Level 3

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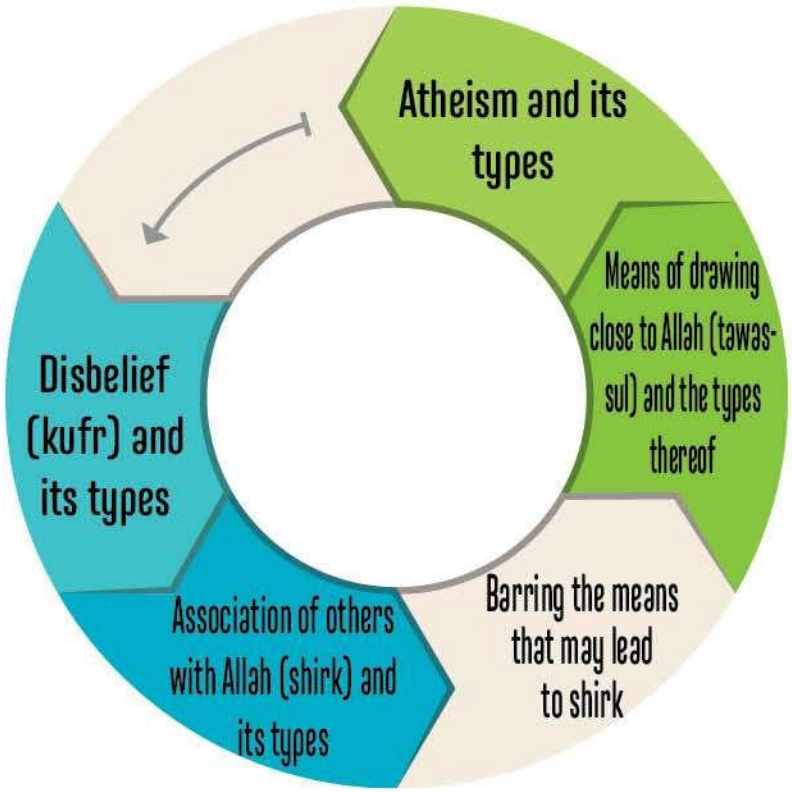
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1

Belief in the angels and the Books

In this unit we will study

- Belief in the angels
- The importance of believing in the angels
- Belief in the angels includes four things
- The deeds of some of the angels
- The outcomes of belief in the angels
- Belief in the Books
- The Books which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ revealed
- The outcomes of belief in the Books

The remaining pillars of faith

In Levels 1 and 2, we covered the first of the pillars of faith comprehensively, namely belief in Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, the belief that He Alone is to be worshipped, and belief in His Lordship and in His names and attributes. In this level, we will discuss the remaining pillars of faith.

The second pillar: Belief in the angels

What is meant by the angels

The Arabic word **mala'ikah** (angels) is the plural of malak, which is derived from the word **alukah**, meaning message. The related word **mal'ak** (or malak) refers to an angel, because he conveys the message from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. The verb alaka means "he carried the message."

At-Tabari رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ said: The angels are called al-mala'ikah because they carry messages; they are messengers of Allah between Him and His prophets and those among His slaves to whom they are sent.

Or the word may be derived from **al-malk** which refers to seizing with power.

In Islamic terminology, the mala'ikah are among the beings created by Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ created them from light, and they are controlled and subjugated by Him. They are honoured slaves of Allah who never disobey Allah's commands and do what they are commanded to do. They cannot be described as male or female; they do not eat or drink, they do not become weary or tired, and they do not get married. No one knows their number except Allah.

Some scholars have described them as being entities of light who have been given the ability to change shape and appear in different forms, by Allah's leave.

The importance of believing in the angels:

Believing in the angels is the second of the pillars of faith, and a person's faith is not valid unless he affirms that, believes in the existence of the angels and believes what has been narrated in the Quran and Sunnah about their attributes and deeds.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers}* [al-Baqarah 2:285], *{Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and His messengers and Gabriel and Michael - then indeed, Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers}* [al-Baqarah 2:98].

Belief in the angels includes four things

1. Believing that they exist in a real sense.

2. Believing in those whose names we know, such as Jibreel; as for those whose names we do not know, we believe in them in general terms.

3. Believing in what we know of their attributes, such as the attributes of Jibreel. The Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ told us that he saw him in his form in which he was created, with six hundred wings, and he filled the horizon.

   An angel may change shape, by Allah's command, and turn into human form, as happened with Jibreel when Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ sent him to Maryam, and he appeared before her in the form of a perfect human being.

4. Believing in what we know of their deeds, which they undertake by the command of Allah, such as glorifying Him and worshipping Him night and day, without growing weary or tired.

The deeds of some of the angels:

Each of them has a special task; there follow some examples of that:

- Jibreel, who was entrusted with the revelation of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ; He sent him with the revelation to the prophets and messengers.
- Mikaeel who is entrusted with the rain and bringing forth vegetation.
- Israfeel, whose task is to blow the Trumpet when the Hour begins and all people are resurrected.
- The Angel of Death, whose task is to seize people's souls at the time of death.
- Malik the keeper of Hell.
- The angels who are appointed in charge of foetuses in the wombs.
- The angels who are appointed to record the deeds of the sons of Adam and to write them down in the record of each individual.
- The angels who are appointed to question the deceased when he is placed in his grave.

There is a widespread notion that the name of the Angel of Death is Azraeel. This name is not mentioned in the Quran or Sunnah. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ mentions him in His Book in terms of his role, as He عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Say, "The angel of death will take you who has been entrusted with you"}* [as-Sajdah 32:11].

The outcomes of believing in the angels

1. Being grateful to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ for His care for the sons of Adam, as He has appointed some of these angels to watch over them, record their deeds, and do other things which are in their interests.

2. Reassurance for the believer that he is surrounded by the care of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ as He has appointed over him these mighty creatures, to take care of his affairs, and to run many of the affairs of the universe by Allah's leave.

3

Being steadfast in adhering to the command of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. The one who bears in mind the fact that the angels are with him, and never leave him, and believes that they are watching everything that he does and says, and witnessing every action he does, will feel shy before Allah and His troops, so he will not go against Allah's command or disobey Him in public or in private.

The third pillar: Belief in the Books

In Arabic, the word kitab (book) refers to anything that is written and put together. The Quran is called a kitab (book) because of what is compiled in it of stories, likenesses, beliefs, commands, prohibitions and legislation, or because it includes all of the previous Books.

What is meant by the Books here is the books and scriptures that contained the words of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, that He revealed to His messengers عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ.

The importance of believing in the Books

Believing in the Books is one of the basic principles of the Islamic creed aqeedah and one of the pillars of faith. No one's faith is valid unless he believes in the Books that Allah sent down to His messengers عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{O you who have believed, believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book that He sent down upon His Messenger and the Scripture which He sent down before. And whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day has certainly gone far astray}* [an-Nisa 4:136].

The books that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ sent down include the following:

The Torah: this is the Book of Allah which was brought by Musa عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And We gave Moses the Scripture, after We had destroyed the former generations, as enlightenment for the people}* [al-Qasas 28:43].

According to the hadith about the debate between Adam and Musa عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ, which was narrated from Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, from the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: **«Adam said to him: O Musa, Allah chose you to speak to directly, and He wrote the Torah for you with His own Hand.»** Narrated in as-Sahihayn.

"**Torah**" is a Hebrew word which refers to teaching and law.

Today the Jews use this word to refer to the collection of the five books, namely: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

The Zabur (Psalms): this is a Book of Allah that He sent down to Dawud عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ. Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ says: *{and to David We gave the book [of Psalms]}* [an-Nisa 4:163]. Qatadah said in his commentary on this verse: It was narrated to us that it was a supplication that Allah taught to Dawud عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ, and praise and glorification of Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. There is nothing in it about what is lawful, what is prohibited, obligatory duties or hadd punishments.

The Injeel (Gospel): Injeel comes from a Greek word meaning good news.

It is the Book of Allah that He sent down to Isa عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ. Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ says: *{And We sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah; and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light}* [al-Ma'idah 5:46].

In the Quran, Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ tells us that the Torah and the Gospel are texts which foretold the coming of our Prophet Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ says: *{Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel}* [al-A'raf 7:157].

After the **Injeel** was distorted and altered by the Christians, the word Gospel was applied to the four Gospels, namely:

1. **The Gospel of Matthew**
2. **The Gospel of Mark**
3. **The Gospel of Luke**
4. **The Gospel of John**

These four Gospels speak of the life of Isa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and some of his words and deeds, but they have been distorted and also speak of the Trinity, and include lies against Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. They form part of the New Testament.

The Quran: is the word of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. It began as words from Him, and He sent it down to His Messenger as revelation, which the believers believe to be the truth. Jibreel عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام heard it from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and brought it down to the last of His Messengers, Muhammad صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ with the exact words that he heard.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ refers to the Quran in various ways, as He said: *{Alif, Lam, Ra. These are the verses of the wise Book}* [Yunus 10:1], *{And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things}* [an-Nahl 16:89].

The Quran is the Book which Allah has guaranteed to preserve verbatim, as He عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur›an and indeed, We will be its guardian}* [al-Hijr 15:9], *{Falsehood cannot approach it from before it or from behind it; [it is] a revelation from a [Lord who is] Wise and Praiseworthy}* [Fussilat 41:42].

In order to attain belief in this great pillar of faith, it is essential to do the following:

1. To believe firmly that it was all sent down from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and that it is the words of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and of no one else. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Allah - there is no god worthy of worship except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of existence. He has sent down upon you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth, confirming what was before it. And He revealed the Torah and the Gospel Before, as guidance for the people. And He revealed the Quran}* [Aal Imran 3:2-4].
2. To believe what is mentioned in them that is proven to be sound, such as what is mentioned in the Quran and what is also mentioned in previous books that has not been subject to alteration or distortion.
3. To believe that they all called people to worship Allah Alone, with no partner or associate, although the laws differed.
4. To believe that the Books that came before the Quran have been subject to distortion, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ testified that the Jews distorted their Book, as He عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Do you hope, O believers, that they would believe for you while a party of them used to hear the words of Allah and then distort the Torah after they had understood it, knowingly?}* [al-Baqarah 2:75].

The outcomes of believing in the Books

1. Awareness of Allah's care for His slaves, as He sent down to them Books by which they could be guided.

2. Awareness of Allah's wisdom in His laws, as He prescribed for each nation that which was appropriate to its circumstances, as He عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{To each [community] among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way}* [al-Ma'idah 5:48].

3. Protection from confusion in thought and belief, and following a clear, straight path in which there is no confusion or crookedness.

4. Knowing that there is no way for a human being to reach Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ except through revelation from Him عَزَّوَجَلَّ sent through a Prophet. Hence there is no room for working it out on the basis of reason.

Activities

1. Write a brief essay about the tasks undertaken by the angels that are mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah.

.....

2. Does the Quran abrogate the Books that came before it? What is our attitude towards the laws that came before us? Use other sources.

.....

3. What is meant by the Scriptures of Ibrahim and Musa?

.....

4. What do you know about the Gospel of Barnabas? Why do the Christians object to it? Use other sources.

.....

5. Define the words "angels" and "books" in both linguistic terms and in Islamic terminology.

.....

2

Belief in the messengers

In this unit we will study

- Belief in the messengers
- The difference between a messenger and a prophet
- The importance of believing in the messengers
- Belief in the messengers includes...
- The outcomes of believing in the messengers

The fourth pillar: Belief in the messengers

What is meant by the messengers

In linguistic terms, the word rasool (messenger) is derived from irsal, which means sending.

In Islamic terminology, it refers to someone whom Allah chose to receive His revelation and convey it to a disbelieving people.

It was also said that it refers to a person who was sent to people who had drifted away, to remind them of the command to believe in Allah Alone (Tawhid).

Definition of the word nabiy (prophet)

In linguistic terms, the word nabiy (prophet) is derived from naba, which means news. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{About what are they asking one another? About the great news [an-naba' il-'azeem]}* [an-Naba 78:1-2].

A prophet is called nabiy because he is informed of something and informs others of it.

In Islamic terminology, the word nabiy refers to someone whom Allah chose to receive His revelation and commanded him to act in accordance with it.

The difference between a messenger (rasool) and a prophet (nabiy):

Some of the scholars are of the view that there is no difference between a messenger and a prophet, but this is not correct.

Some of them are of the view that there is a difference between them, as they said: **The messenger** is the one to whom a law was revealed, and he was commanded to convey it.

And **the prophet** is the one to whom revelation was sent, but he was not commanded to convey it.

This is far-fetched for several reasons:

Firstly, Allah stated that He sent the prophets as He sent the messengers. He عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And We did not send before you any messenger or prophet except that ...}* [al-Hajj 22:52]. Being sent implies that the prophet was to convey the message.

Secondly: not conveying means concealing the revelation of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and Allah did not send down His revelation for it to be concealed and withheld in the heart of any person, so that this knowledge would die when that person died.

Thirdly: the Messenger ﷺ said: **«The nations were shown to me, and a prophet came by accompanied by one man, a prophet accompanied by two men, a prophet accompanied by a small group, and a prophet who was not accompanied by anyone.»** Agreed upon.

This indicates that the Prophets conveyed the religion of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and that they varied in terms of the response to their call.

It was said with regard to the difference between them that the rasool (messenger) is one to whom a new law was revealed, and the nabiy (prophet) is one who was sent to confirm the law of the one who came before him.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said: The rasool is the one who was sent to a disbelieving people who rejected the truth, and the nabiy is the one who was sent to a believing people with the law of the rasool who came before him, to teach them and judge between them.

Perhaps this is the view that is most likely to be correct.

The importance of believing in the messengers:

Belief in the messengers is one of the basic principles of faith, without which a Muslim's faith is not complete. Whoever disbelieves in one of them has disbelieved in Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and in all the messengers عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allah and His messengers and wish to make a distinction between [belief in] Allah and [belief in] His messengers and say, "We believe in some and disbelieve in others," and wish to adopt a way in between, Those are the disbelievers, truly. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment. But they who believe in Allah and His messengers and do not discriminate between any of them - to those He is going to give their rewards. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful}* [an-Nisa 4:150-152].

What is meant by believing in the messengers:

Believing in the Messengers means believing firmly that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ sent a messenger to every nation, to call them to worship Allah Alone and to reject everything that is worshipped besides Him; and that they were all sent and spoke the truth, and they conveyed everything with which Allah sent them.

Believing in the messengers includes the following:

1. Believing that their message is truth from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and that disbelieving in one of them is disbelieving in all of them. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{The people of Noah denied the messengers}* [ash-Shu'ara 26:105], *{Thamud denied the messengers}* [ash-Shu'ara 26:141], *{'Aad denied the messengers}* [ash-Shu'ara 26:123]. Even though only one messenger was sent to each of these groups, Allah still mentioned {the messengers}, because disbelieving in one messenger is disbelieving in the message itself and in all the messengers.

2. Believing that they all brought the call to affirm the oneness of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and worship Him Alone. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, "There is no god worthy of worship except Me, so worship Me."}* [al-Anbiya 21:25]. Even though their laws differed – *{To each [community] among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way}* [al-Ma'idah 5:48] – the religion of the Prophets is one, namely Islam and Tawhid; it is only the laws that differed.

3. Believing that the messengers were infallible and protected from error in their conveying of the message.

4. Believing that the messengers عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ vary in status, and that the last and best of them is our Prophet Muhammad صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Those messengers - some of them We caused to exceed others. Among them were those to whom Allah spoke, and He raised some of them in degree}* [al-Baqarah 2:253].

   {Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allah and last of the prophets} [al-Ahzab 33:40].

The outcomes of believing in the messengers:

1. Awareness of the mercy of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and His care for His slaves, as He sent messengers to them to guide them to the path of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.
2. Gratitude to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ for this immense blessing.
3. Love, veneration and appreciation for the messengers عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ, as is appropriate for them.

3

Belief in the Last Day and in the divine will and decree

In this unit we will study

- Belief in the Last Day
- Belief in the Last Day includes...
- The outcomes of believing in the Last Day
- Belief in the divine will and decree
- Ruling on belief in the divine will and decree
- Levels of belief in the divine will and decree
- Outcomes of believing in the divine will and decree

The fifth pillar: Belief in the Last Day

The Last Day is the Day of Resurrection, on which people will be resurrected for the reckoning and the requital.

It is so called because there will be no day after it, as the people of Paradise will settle in their abodes, and the people of Hell will settle in their abodes.

What is meant by believing in the Last Day:

Believing firmly that this Day will come to pass. So it means believing that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ will resurrect the people from their graves, then He will call them to account and will requite them for their deeds, until the people of Paradise settle in their abodes and the people of Hell settle in their abodes.

The Last Day is also called: al-Waqi'ah (the inevitable occurrence), al-Haqqah (the inevitable Hour), al-Qari'ah (the striking calamity), ar-Rajfah (the earthquake), as-Saakhkhah (the deafening blast), al-Faz' al-Akbar (the greatest terror), Yawm al-Hisab (the day of reckoning) and Yawm ad-Deen (the day of judgement).

Believing in the Last Day includes believing in everything that will happen after death, such as:

1. Punishment and bliss in the grave for both body and soul together, and **the trial of the grave,** which is the questioning of the deceased, after his burial, about his Lord, his religion and his Prophet.

2. **The resurrection and the gathering,** which is when the dead will be brought back to life and brought forth from their graves, and their souls will be restored to their bodies, then all people will stand before the Lord of the Worlds. Then they will be gathered in one place. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Then indeed, after that you are to die. Then indeed you, on the Day of Resurrection, will be resurrected}* [al-Mu'minun 23:15-16].

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The reckoning and the balance. Allah will bring all people to account for their deeds that they did in this world, then whoever was among those who affirmed Allah's oneness and obeyed Allah and His Messenger ﷺ will have an easy reckoning, and whoever associated others with Allah and disobeyed Him will have a difficult reckoning.

Deeds will be weighed in a huge balance, which is something real. Good deeds will be placed in one pan and bad deeds in the other, then those whose good deeds outweigh their bad deeds will be among the people of Paradise, and those whose bad deeds outweigh their good deeds will be among the people of Hell. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{We will set up scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so that no soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least. Even if [a deed] is the weight of a grain of mustard seed, We will bring it forth, and sufficient are We as Reckoners}* [al-Anbiya 21:47].

4

Paradise and Hell. They have already been created and they will never cease to exist. Allah has created people for both of them; whoever He wills should be for Paradise, it is by His grace, and whoever He wills is for Hell, it is by His justice. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous}* [Aal Imran 3:133], *{then fear the Fire, whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers}* [al-Baqarah 2:24].

The outcomes of believing in the Last Day:

1. Keenness to obey Allah, seeking the reward of that Day, and keeping away from disobedience to Him, for fear of the punishment of that Day.
2. Consolation for the believer for what he misses out on of worldly pleasures, for he knows that his greatest reward will only come in the Hereafter, and that for every calamity that befalls him in this world, there will be reward for it on that Day, so he bears it with patience, and thus Allah multiplies the reward for his good deeds.
3. Awareness of the perfect justice of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, as He will requite everyone for their deeds, in addition to His mercy towards His slaves.
4. Increased fear of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and hope for His reward that He has prepared for His righteous slaves.

Affirmation of the Last Day is the greatest refutation of the atheists, who say that there is no God. That is because, if there were no God, no reckoning and no punishment, this world would fall into chaos and ruin, for no one would fear any punishment; people would mistreat one another and devour one another's wealth. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Then did you think that We created you without purpose and that to Us you would not be returned?}* [al-Mu'minun 23:115].

The sixth pillar: Belief in the divine will and decree

What is meant by al-qada wa'l-qadar (translated above as the divine will and decree):

- **In linguistic terms, the word qada** refers to doing something well and finishing it properly.
- **In linguistic terms, the word qadar** refers to evaluating and knowing how much a thing is; in other words, becoming aware of its size or estimate. This refers to awareness of the extent of things.

Al-qada wa'l-qadar in Islamic terminology:

Some of the scholars are of the view that these two words mean the same, namely Allah's decreeing how all things are to be, in accordance with His prior knowledge and as dictated by His wisdom.

Other scholars of the view that there is a difference between them, so **al-qadar** refers to the general, holistic decree from eternity,

And al-qada refers to the details of that decree and how it will unfold.

Thus Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ decrees [qadar] that a particular thing should happen at its appointed time, then when the time comes at which it is decreed that this thing should happen, it comes to pass [qada].

This view is the most correct view.

Ruling on believing in the divine will and decree:

Belief in the divine will and decree is one of the six pillars of faith. That is supported by the Quran and Sunnah, and by scholarly consensus. Whoever rejects belief in the divine will and decree has disbelieved in Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and has gone beyond the bounds of Islam. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And ever is the command of Allah a destiny decreed}* [al-Ahzab 33:38], *{But [it was] so that Allah might accomplish a matter already destined}* [al-Anfal 8:42], *{Indeed, all things We created with predestination}* [al-Qamar 54:49].

In the hadith of Jibreel عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام that is narrated in Sahih Muslim it says: **«... And to believe in the divine decree, both good and bad.»** And the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«You should understand that whatever has befallen you could not have missed you, and whatever has missed you could not have befallen you.»** Narrated by Ahmad and Abu Dawud; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

During the Jahiliyyah, the Arabs were aware of the divine decree and never denied it. The poet Antarah said:

O Ablah how could I escape my death, if my Lord has already decreed it from heaven?

One of the scholars of Arabic language said: I know of no Arab who denied the divine will and decree. And he said: All the Arabs, both before and after the advent of Islam, affirmed the concept of the divine decree, both good and bad. Then he said in verse:

Even the stitching of a needle is subject to the divine decree;

A needle will not stop stitching except in accordance with the divine decree.

Components of belief in the divine decree:

Belief in the divine decree is not complete until you believe in four components, which are:

1. **The component of knowledge.** This means believing in the knowledge of Allah which encompasses all things, and that Allah knew all of His creation before He created them, and He knew what they would do. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{He is Allah, other than whom there is no god worthy of worship, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed}* [al-Hashr 59:22].

2. **The component of writing.** This means believing that Allah wrote the decrees of all creation in al-Lawh al-Mahfuz. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Do you not know that Allah knows what is in the heaven and earth? Indeed, that is in a Record. Indeed that, for Allah, is easy}* [al-Hajj 22:70]. The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Allah wrote the decrees of all creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth.»** Narrated by Muslim.

3. **The component of will.** This means believing that everything that happens in this universe happens by the will of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. Hence whatever Allah wills happens, and whatever He does not will does not happen, so nothing is beyond the framework of His will. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And you do not will except that Allah wills - Lord of the worlds}* [at-Takweer 81:29].

4. **The component of creation.** This means believing that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ is the Creator of all things, so nothing happens in this universe except that He is its Creator, because He عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Say, "Allah is the Creator of all things"}* [ar-Ra'd 13:16].

The poet summed it up when he said:

Divine knowledge; our Lord's writing it; His will;

His creation of what He willed, which is bringing it into existence and making it.

Related issues:

- You should understand that humans have a will and a choice.

  Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{For whoever wills among you to take a right course}* [at-Takweer 81:28].

- A person's will and ability do not operate outside the bounds of the power and will of Allah. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And you do not will except that Allah wills - Lord of the worlds}* [at-Takweer 81:29].

One of the early generations (the salaf) said: I reflected on the divine will, and I realized that the people who are safest are those who refrain from discussing it, and the people who are most misguided are those who discuss it the most.

When speaking of the issue of the divine will, it is not permissible to do the following:

- **To discuss the issue of the divine will on the basis of false arguments, not on the basis of knowledge or evidence.**
- **To rely on limited human reasoning in an attempt to understand the divine decree, ignoring the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah.**
- **To discuss the subtle issues of the divine decree, which refers to the secrets of Allah in His creation, of which no angel who is close to Allah and no prophet who was sent was informed, for that is something beyond human comprehension.**
- **To raise objections that are not appropriate, as is done by those who say out of stubbornness: Why has Allah made So and So rich and made So and So poor? And so on.**

The outcomes of believing in the divine decree:

Believing in the divine will and decree has good outcomes and a positive impact, that brings benefits to both the ummah and the individual. The most prominent of those outcomes are:

- Depending on Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ when taking measures, in the sense that one does not depend on the measure itself, because everything happens by the will and decree of Allah.
- Not being filled with self-admiration when attaining one's goal, because attaining it is a blessing from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, because of what He has decreed of the means that lead to goodness and success. Self-admiration causes a person to forget to give thanks for His blessing.
- Reassurance and peace of mind, because whatever happens to him happens by the decree of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, so he does not become anxious if he misses out on something he wanted or if something he dislikes happens, because that is by the decree of Allah to Whom belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, and it was bound to happen.

Activities

1. **Were Dhu'l-Qarnayn and Tubba prophets? Quote evidence for what you say.**
2. **Discuss the difference between a prophet (nabiy) and a messenger (rasool).**
3. **From your point of view, what is the most important benefit of sending the messengers?**
4. **The phrase "He has gone to his final resting place" is widespread. What do you say about it?**
5. **How would you respond to the atheists on the basis of belief in the Last Day?**
6. **What is the difference between al-qada and al-qadar? What are the components of belief in the divine will and decree?**

4

Things that nullify and undermine Tawhid

In this unit we will study

- Things that nullify and undermine Tawhid
- Types of disbelief (kufr)
- The difference between major disbelief and minor disbelief
- Shirk and its types
- Types of major shirk
- Forms of major shirk
- Barring the means that lead to shirk
- Minor shirk and its categories
- Contemporary forms of superstition
- Swearing by anything other than Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and superstition
- The difference between disbelief (kufr) and shirk

Things that nullify and undermine Tawhid: Disbelief (kufr), shirk and their types

Definition of kufr:

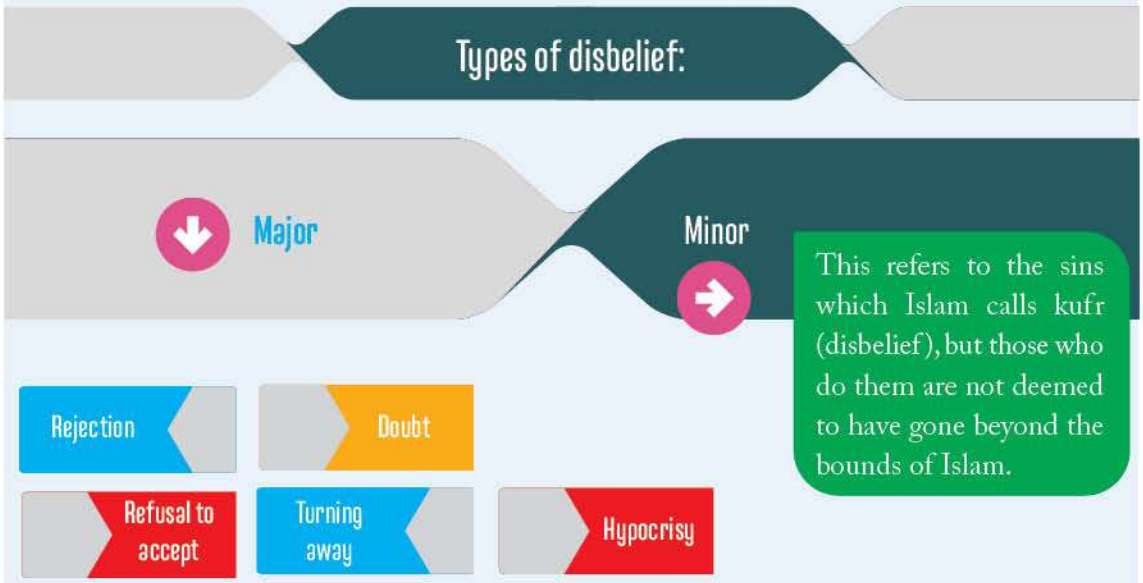
In linguistic terms, the word kufr (translated above as disbelief) means covering and concealing. So the verb kafara (cover) may be used to refer to the night, because it conceals everything with its darkness; and it may be used to refer to the sea, because it covers everything that is in it; and it may be used to refer to the clouds, because they cover the sun.

From the same root comes the word kafaarah (expiation), because kafaarah covers sins, such as kafaarat al-yamin (expiation for breaking an oath) and kafaarat az-zihar (expiation for zihar – a jahili form of divorce in which a man says to his wife, "You are to me as my mother's back").

In Islamic terminology, kufr (disbelief) refers to not believing in Allah and His messengers, whether or not that is accompanied by rejection. It refers to any doubt or turning away from belief, out of envy or arrogance, or following whims and desires that distract one from following the message.

The connection between the linguistic meaning and the religious meaning is that the kafir (disbeliever) has covered his heart so that faith could not enter it. Al-Layth said: "The kafir is only called thus because kufr has covered his heart."

Types of disbelief: kufr is of two types:



The first type: major disbelief that puts a person beyond the bounds of Islam. This is of five types:

1. The disbelief of rejection: this means believing that the messengers عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ were liars.

Or the accountable person denies any of the fundamentals or rulings of faith, or any of the reports which are proven definitively and are well known and well established, and no one has any excuse for denying them.

Such as one who rejects fasting and claims that it reduces productivity, or one who claims that cutting off the hand of a thief is barbaric.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And who is more unjust than one who invents a lie about Allah or denies the truth when it has come to him? Is there not in Hell a [sufficient] residence for the disbelievers}* [al-Ankabut 29:68], *{The people of Lot denied the messengers}* [ash-Shu'ara 26:160].

2. The disbelief of resentment and arrogance, whilst acknowledging the truth. This means that a person is aware of the truth of the Messenger, and that he brought the truth from Allah, but he does not submit to his rulings and commands, out of arrogance or stubbornness.

For example, Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers}* [al-Baqarah 2:34], *{And as for those who disbelieved [it will be said to them]: Were not My revelations recited to you? But you showed arrogance and were wicked people}* [al-Jathiyah 45:31].

3. The disbelief of doubt. This refers to wavering and not firmly believing in the truth of the messengers.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And he entered his garden while he was unjust to himself. He said, "I do not think that this will perish – ever – And I do not think the Hour will occur. And even if I should be brought back to my Lord, I will surely find better than this as a return." His companion said to him while he was conversing with him, "Have you disbelieved in He who created you from dust and then from a sperm-drop and then proportioned you [as] a man?"}* [al-Kahf 18:35-37].

4. The disbelief of turning away completely from religion, by turning away with one's hearing, heart and knowledge from that which the Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ brought. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{But those who disbelieve, from that of which they are warned, are turning away}* [al-Ahqaf 46:3].

5. The disbelief of hypocrisy. What is meant here is hypocrisy of belief, in the sense of making an outward display of faith whilst concealing disbelief in one's heart. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{That is because they believed, and then they disbelieved; so their hearts were sealed over, and they do not understand}* [al-Munafiqun 63:3].

The second type of disbelief is: minor disbelief. This refers to the sins which Islam calls kufr (disbelief), but those who do them are not deemed to have gone beyond the bounds of Islam.

Another of the root meanings of kufr is ingratitude and lack of appreciation for blessings [kufr an-ni'mah] , as mentioned in the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And Allah presents an example: a city which was safe and secure, its provision coming to it in abundance from every location, but it denied [fa kafarat] the favors of Allah. So Allah made it taste the envelopment of hunger and fear for what they had been doing}* [an-Nahl 16:112].

Another example is fighting a Muslim, as the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **"Reviling a Muslim is evildoing (fusuq) and fighting him is kufr."** Narrated by Muslim.

In this hadith, the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ describes a Muslim's fighting his Muslim brother as kufr, but this is kufr in the sense of minor kufr, based on the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two}* [al-Hujurat 49:9]. Thus Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ calls them believers, despite the fighting between them.

Other examples of this type of disbelief are: casting aspersions upon people's lineage and wailing for the deceased. The Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«There are two types of people in whom there is some disbelief (kufr): those who cast aspersions on people's lineage, and women who wail for the dead.»** Narrated by Muslim.

Another example is a person attributing himself to someone other than his father, when he knows who his father is, because the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Do not turn away from your fathers; whoever turns away from his father, that is disbelief (kufr).»** Agreed upon.

The difference between major and minor disbelief

1. **Major disbelief** puts a person beyond the bounds of Islam and renders good deeds invalid. **Minor disbelief** does not put a person beyond the bounds of Islam or render good deeds invalid, but it undermines their reward commensurate with the level of disbelief and exposes the doer to the threat of punishment.

2. The one who commits **major disbelief** will abide forever in Hell, whereas the one who commits **minor disbelief** is subject to the will of Allah: if He wills He will punish him, and if He wills He will forgive him, and if He punishes him in Hell, he will not abide therein forever.

3 In the case of **major disbelief,** the blood and wealth of the doer become permissible; that does not apply in the case of **minor disbelief**.

4 **Major disbelief** necessitates complete enmity between the doer and the believers, so it is not permissible for the believers to love him or take him as a friend or ally, even if he is the closest of relatives. In the case of **minor disbelief**, it does not rule out taking the doer as a friend or ally in general terms; rather the doer may be loved and taken as a friend or ally to an extent commensurate with what he has of faith, and he may be hated and regarded as an enemy to an extent commensurate with what he is committing of sin.

Shirk and its types

Many people think that shirk only refers to prostrating to idols, but this is a grave error. Shirk takes many forms and is of many types, some of which are visible and some are hidden, and a person may fall into them without realizing.

Hence the Prophet ﷺ said: **«O people, protect yourselves from shirk, for it is more hidden and subtle than the footsteps of an ant.»** Narrated by Ahmad and by al-Bukhari in al-Adab al-Mufrad; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

Al-Khaleel Ibrahim عليه السلام prayed to his Lord to help him and his sons avoid shirk: *{...and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols}* [Ibrahim 14:35].

And we are more in need of taking precautions and warning our children against all types and forms of shirk, both major and minor.

Definition of shirk

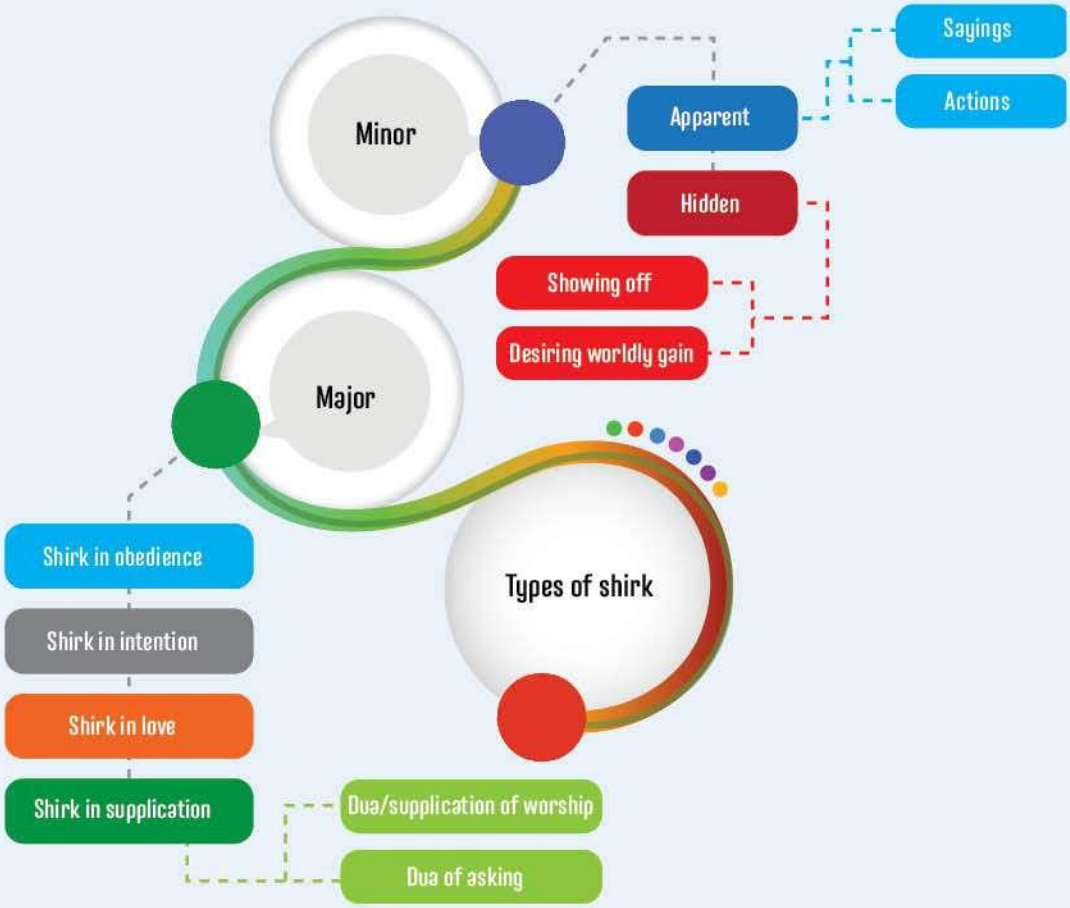
In Arabic, the word shirk refers to anything that could be shared between more than one person, so that no one individual can claim that it is his.

In Islamic terminology, shirk refers to ascribing partners to Allah عز وجل in His Lordship, in worship of Him, or in His names and attributes, so that those partners become rivals to Allah عز وجل in that which is exclusively His and what He عز وجل Alone deserves of worship.

The dangers of shirk

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed, association [with Him] is great injustice}* [Luqman 31:13], *{Indeed, he who associates others with Allah – Allah has forbidden him Paradise, and his refuge is the Fire. And there are not for the wrongdoers any helpers}* [al-Ma'idah 5:72], *{Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin}* [an-Nisa 4:48], *{And he who associates with Allah – it is as though he had fallen from the sky and was snatched by the birds or the wind carried him down into a remote place}* [al-Hajj 22:31].

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: I asked the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: Which sin is worst in the sight of Allah? He said: **«To ascribe to Allah a rival when He has created you.»** I said: That is indeed serious. Narrated by al-Bukhari.



Types of shirk:

Major shirk that puts a person beyond the bounds of Islam, for which the doer will abide forever in Hell, if he dies without having repented from it.

What this means is devoting any kind of worship to anything or anyone other than Allah.

It is not permissible to devote worship to anything or anyone except Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord - let him do righteous deeds and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone}* [al-Kahf 18:110].

Therefore devoting any acts of worship – whether it is a belief, words or action – to Allah Alone is affirmation of His oneness Tawhid, faith and sincerity, but devoting it to anyone or anything other than Him is shirk and disbelief (kufr).

Types of major shirk:

Major shirk is divided into various types:

1. Shirk of supplication (dua): that is, calling upon something or someone other than Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. Supplication is the essence of worship. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you." Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible}* [Ghafir 40:60], *{And [He revealed] that the masjids are for Allah, so do not invoke with Allah anyone}* [al-Jinn 72:18]. And the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Supplication is worship.»** Narrated by Ahmad and the authors of as-Sunan with a sahih isnad.

Supplication (dua) is of two types:

1. **The first type is supplication of worship,** which is seeking to draw close to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ by doing different acts of worship, because in fact the one who is worshipping Allah is implicitly hoping for His mercy and fearing His punishment.

2. **The second type is supplication of asking,** which means asking for that which will benefit the supplicant and for the removal of that which is harming him. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And they worship other than Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, "These are our intercessors with Allah"}* [Yunus 10:18]. So whoever calls upon a prophet or an angel or a wali ("saint") or a grave or any other created thing is a mushrik and a disbeliever.

Ibn al-Qayyim said: One of the types of major shirk is seeking what you need from the dead, seeking their help and turning to them. This is the origin of shirk among mankind. The deeds of the dead person have come to an end, and he does not have the power to harm or benefit himself, let alone those who seek his help and ask him to meet their needs.

The guideline on what is and is not permissible with regard to asking of anyone other than Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ:

Whoever asks of anyone other than Allah that which no one has the power to do except Allah has associated someone else with Him (shirk). Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And who is more astray than he who invokes besides Allah those who will not respond to him until the Day of Resurrection, and they, of their invocation, are unaware}* [al-Ahqaf 46:5].

As for the one who asks of people that which they are able to do, there is nothing wrong with that, such as saying to one's brother: Lend me your car, or Lend me some money, or Help me to carry these things, and other ordinary, everyday matters.

As for asking of the dead, this is shirk in all cases, whether a living person would be able to do that thing or not, such as asking the dead to pay off his debts, or to help him buy something, and the like.

The sincerity and coming to Islam of Ikrimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ:

On the day of the conquest of Makkah, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ granted safety to the people, except four men and two women, of whom he said: **«Kill them all, even if you find them clinging to the covers of the Kaaba.»** Among them he mentioned Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl.

Ikrimah fled and embarked on a ship, but a strong wind came up, so the crew of the ship said: Be sincere in calling upon Allah Alone, for your gods cannot avail you anything in this situation.

Ikrimah said: By Allah, if nothing will save me from the sea except sincerity to Allah Alone, then nothing except that will save me on land. O Allah, I promise You that if You save me from the situation I am in, I shall go to Muhammad صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and put my hand in his, and I shall certainly find him kind and generous. So he came and became Muslim… Narrated by Abu Dawud and an-Nasai; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

Similarly:

Asking a created being for help with that which no one has the power to do except the Creator is shirk.

As for asking people for help in matters in which they are able to help, there is nothing wrong with that.

2. Shirk of intention, will and objective. This means intending entirely by one's actions to attain some worldly purpose, or to show off, or to seek a reputation, which is pure hypocrisy, and not intending at all to seek the pleasure of Allah and the Hereafter.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed, the hypocrites [think to] deceive Allah, but He is deceiving them. And when they stand for prayer, they stand lazily, showing [themselves to] the people and not remembering Allah except a little}* [an-Nisa 4:142].

3. Shirk of obedience. The promulgation of laws and the issuing of commands and prohibitions are the exclusive right of Allah, so whoever believes that anyone other than Allah has the right to promulgate laws and issue commands and prohibitions has associated someone else with Him (shirk). Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Or do they have partners who have prescribed for them a religion for which Allah has not given any authority?}* [ash-Shura 42:21].

Ash-Shinqeeti said: Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ describes those who prescribed in religion that for which Allah gave no authority as partners.

It was narrated that Adiy ibn Hatim رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: I heard the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ reciting from Surat Bara'ah: *{They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah}* [at-Tawbah 9:31].

Adiy said: But they do not worship them; rather if they permit something to them they regard it as permissible, and if they forbid something to them, they regard it as forbidden. The Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«That is how they worship them.»** Narrated by at-Tirmidhi; classed as hasan by al-Albani.

4. The shirk of love. What is meant here is the love that is an essential part of being a slave of Allah (ubudiyah), which requires veneration, humility and submission, and which is not appropriate for anyone except for Allah Alone, with no partner or associate. If a person devotes such love to anyone other than Allah, then he has associated someone else with Him in the sense of major shirk. The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And [yet], among the people are those who take other than Allah as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love Allah. But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah}* [al-Baqarah 2:165].

The forms of major shirk include the following:

- **Offering sacrifices to anything or anyone other than Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, seeking to draw close to that object of worship and venerating it,** such as offering sacrifices to idols, the Shaytan, the jinn, the prophets, the awliya, or the righteous.

Offering sacrifices is a kind of worship. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Say, "Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds"}* [al-An'am 6:162].

The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«May Allah curse the one who offers a sacrifice to anything or anyone other than Allah.»** Narrated by Muslim.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said: Offering a sacrifice to one's object of worship is the utmost level of humility and submission to it. Hence it is not permissible to offer sacrifices to anyone or anything other than Allah, or to mention the name of anyone other than Allah when slaughtering an animal.

What some people do, offering sacrifices to the graves of those who they claim are awliya, constitutes shirk that puts the doer beyond the bounds of Islam.

Our advice to these people is to repent to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. If they repent to Allah and make their sacrifices for Allah Alone, then He will forgive their previous deeds, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Say to those who have disbelieved [that] if they cease, what has previously occurred will be forgiven for them}* [al-Anfal 8:38].

- The meat of that which has been sacrificed to anything or anyone other than Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ is haram and it is not permissible to eat it, because Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says in the context of listing foods that are prohibited: *{and those which are sacrificed on stone altars}* [al-Ma'idah 5:3].

- **Making vows (nadhr) to anyone or anything other than Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.** A vow is an act of worship to Allah, and can only be devoted to Allah Alone. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said: Whoever makes a vow to anything or anyone other than Allah is a mushrik. It is worse than the shirk of swearing by something other than Allah, and it is like prostrating to someone or something other than Allah.

Exaggerating about the righteous, the awliya, the prophets and others, and devoting some aspects of worship to them. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{O People of the Book, do not exceed the bounds [of truth] in your religion}* [an-Nisa 4:171].

The Prophet ﷺ said: **«Beware of going to extremes, for those who came before you were only doomed because of going to extremes.»** Narrated by Ahmad and an-Nasai; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

Is magic (sihr) kufr?

Magic may be divided into two categories:

The first category is tying knots and incantations, which refers to recitation of mumbo-jumbo and incomprehensible writings through which the practitioner of magic makes the devils join him and help him in what he wants to do to harm the target of his magic. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And they followed [instead] what the devils had recited during the reign of Solomon. It was not Solomon who disbelieved, but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic}* [al-Baqarah 2:102].

And the Prophet ﷺ said: **«Avoid the seven sins that lead to doom.»** We said: What are they, O Messenger of Allah? He said: **«Associating others with Allah (shirk), magic (sihr)...»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

This constitutes major disbelief (kufr) that puts a person beyond the bounds of Islam.

The second category is medicines and potions that have a physical effect on the targeted person, and also affect his mind, will and inclinations. Physical effects on the targeted person include gradually becoming weaker until he dies. It may also cause him to imagine things to be other than they really are.

This does not constitute disbelief, but the one who does this is sinning.

Some of the most abhorrent forms of shirk include the following:

Taking Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and the imams of the Ahl al-Bayt who came after him as lords besides Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ, to the extent that one of them said of Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ in the book of poetry called Diwan al-Husayn:

Abu Hasan, you are the essence of God Himself, And you are the symbol of His sublime power.
You are the one who encompasses all knowledge of the unseen. Is there anything that could be hidden from you?
You are in control; if you want, you can save someone from Hellfire, And if you want, you can cast him into the Fire.

Another abhorrent form of shirk is what they do nowadays in their places of worship, seeking the help of the dead and the Ahl al-Bayt, and offering sacrifices to them. All of that comes under the heading of major shirk – Allah forbid.

Going to extremes with regard to the shaykhs, whom they regard as lords and gods besides Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. Hence they believe that the shaykh or wali is able to create the foetus in its mother's womb; and that he is able to disfigure whoever he wishes; and that he is able to change his form and appear in different forms; and that he has knowledge of the unseen and of what al-Lawh al-Mahfuz contains.

The corrupt nature of their beliefs is seen in the way in which they devote different types of worship to their shaykhs, such as supplication and seeking help and madad (aid, assistance) to relieve distress and meet their needs; offering sacrifices; making vows; absolute obedience when their shaykhs issue rulings prescribing things for which Allah has not granted any authority; and blind following in accepting as permissible that which Allah has forbidden and regarding as forbidden that which Allah has permitted. It is as if the follower of such practices is a dead body in the hands of the one who is washing him, who can turn him whichever way he wishes. There is no power and no strength except with Allah, the Most Great, the Exalted; we seek refuge with Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ from all forms of shirk.

One example of this clear misguidance from the lips of one of their shaykhs is seen in the qaseedah (ode) called Mahbit al-Wahy:

To you, O Messenger of Allah, I complain of our calamities,

That fill the one who is mature and patient with distress.

You are my hope at the time of calamity and you are my support.

You are my refuge on the day when my inner secrets will be examined.

You are healing and mercy for our sick,

And you are a guide who could show the way to anyone who is confused.

Another abhorrent form of shirk is what they do nowadays around the tombs and shrines that have been built over the graves of the awliya and the righteous, calling upon them and seeking to draw close to Allah through them, thus making them a means of seeking closeness to Allah (tawassul) and seeking blessing (barakah) from their shrines, asking them to meet their needs and relieve their distress, seeking their help and asking them for madad (aid, assistance). Such as saying, "Yaa Badawi madad (O Badawi, grant aid)."

Or such as when one of them says: "We celebrate the respected Sayyid al-Badawi who, if he is called upon on land or sea, will respond."

Or they say: "Help me, Abd al-Qadir!"

All of that comes under the heading of major shirk – Allah forbid.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Verily, sincere devotion is due to Allah Alone. As for those who take others besides Him as protectors [they say]: We only worship them so that they may bring us nearer to Allah. Allah will surely judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Verily, Allah does not guide anyone who persists in lies and disbelief}* [az-Zumar 39:3].

Activities

1. List in detail the types of major disbelief (kufr), along with the evidence for them.

.....

2. Give examples of minor disbelief (kufr). Of which type is the disbelief mentioned in the hadith, «Reviling a Muslim is evildoing (fusuq) and fighting him is kufr»?

.....

3. What is meant by major shirk? Give examples.

.....

4. What is the ruling on swearing by someone or something other than Allah? Discuss this matter in detail.

.....

5. Write briefly about what the Sufis do that is contrary to Tawhid. Use other sources.

.....

6. What are the types of major shirk, with evidence for each type? Give three examples of major shirk that are practised by people.

.....

Graves and tombs, and seeking blessing (barakah) from them:

Venerating graves, building structures over them and seeking blessing from them are among the greatest means that lead to shirk.

It was narrated that Aisha and Abdullah ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهم said: When the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم was dying, he began to cover his face with a garment of his, and when he felt overwhelmed, he lifted it from his face and said whilst he was like that: **«May the curse of Allah be upon the Jews and Christians; they took the graves of their prophets as places of worship»** – warning against what they had done. Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

In this hadith, the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم was warning his Companions and all of his ummah against the bad deeds committed by the nations who came before him, who prayed towards the graves of their prophets and took them as a direction of prayer (qiblah) and a place of worship.

According to another report, Aisha رضي الله عنها said: "Were it not for that, his grave would have been made accessible to people, but he feared that it would be taken as a place of worship." Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar said: It is as if he صلى الله عليه وسلم knew that he would die of this sickness, and he was afraid that his grave would be venerated, as had happened in the past. Therefore he cursed the Jews and Christians, as an indication that the one who does what they did is to be condemned.

And the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: **«O Allah, do not let my grave be taken as an idol. May Allah curse people who take the graves of their prophets as places of worship.»** Narrated by Ahmad; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ highlighted the evil action of those who take graves as places of worship:

It was narrated from Aisha that Umm Habibah and Umm Salamah رضي الله عنهن mentioned to the Prophet ﷺ a church that they had seen in Ethiopia in which there were images. He ﷺ said: **«Those people, if there was a righteous man among them and he died, they built a place of worship over his grave and put those images in it. They will be the most evil of people before Allah on the Day of Resurrection.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said:

The leading scholars of the faith are unanimously agreed that it is not permissible to build places of worship over graves, or to drape cloth over them, or to make vows to them, or to place gold and silver at them. Rather the ruling on such wealth is that it should be spent on the public interests of the Muslims, if there is nobody who is particularly entitled to it. It is obligatory to demolish any mosque that has been built over a grave, no matter who the occupant of the grave is, for that is one of the greatest causes that lead to idol worship.

Ibn Hajar al-Haytami رحمه الله said: The ninety-third, ninety-fourth, ninety-fifth, ninety-sixth, ninety-seventh and ninety-eighth major sins are: taking graves as places of worship, lighting lamps on them, taking them as idols, circumambulating them, touching them and praying towards them.

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله said: The Prophet ﷺ forbade building mosques over graves and cursed those who do that. He forbade plastering over graves, making them high, taking them as places of worship, praying towards them or at them, and lighting lamps on them… He issued orders that they be levelled, and he forbade taking them as places to be frequented or travelling specifically to visit them, lest these actions become means that lead to taking them as idols and associating them with Allah in worship. He forbade that for the one who travels for the specific purpose of visiting the graves, and for the one who does not travel for that specific purpose but intends to go there for some other purpose, so as to bar the means that may lead to shirk.

The fact that the Prophet ﷺ spoke emphatically about the issue of graves is indicative of the serious danger of venerating them. Hence he issued instructions that graves be levelled, and he forbade making them high, plastering over them or building structures over them.

It was narrated that Abu'l-Hayaj al-Asadi said: Ali ibn Abi Talib رضي الله عنه said to me: Shall I not send you on the same mission as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent me? Do not leave any image without erasing it, or any built-up grave without levelling it. Narrated by Muslim.

It was narrated that Jabir رضي الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ forbade plastering over graves, sitting on them or building structures over them. Narrated by Muslim.

- He forbade praying towards graves:

It was narrated that Abu Marthad al-Ghanawi رضي الله عنه said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **«Do not pray towards graves and do not sit on them.»** Narrated by Muslim.

It was narrated that Anas رضي الله عنه said: I stood to pray one day, and there was a grave in front of me that I did not notice. Umar رضي الله عنه called out to me: The grave, the grave (al-qabr)! But I thought that he meant the moon (al-qamar). Someone near me said: He means the grave, so I shifted away from it. Narrated by al-Bayhaqi.

- He forbade travelling for the purpose of visiting graves:

This is prohibited because of the general meaning of the hadith: **«Do not travel for the purpose of visiting any mosque except three: al-Masjid al-Haram [in Makkah], the Prophet's Mosque [in Madinah], and al-Masjid al-Aqsa [in Jerusalem].»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

- He forbade slaughtering animals at graves:

The Prophet ﷺ said: **«There is no slaughtering of animals at graves in Islam.»** Narrated by Abu Dawud; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

Imam Ahmad said: During the Jahiliyyah, if a leader died they would slaughter an animal at his grave, but the Prophet ﷺ forbade that.

Other methods of barring the means that may lead to shirk:

» The Prophet ﷺ forbade praying when the sun is rising and setting:

In the hadith it says: **«Pray Fajr, then refrain from praying until the sun has fully risen, for when it rises, it rises between the two sides of the head of a devil, and at that point the disbelievers prostrate to it…»** Narrated by Muslim.

Ibn al-Qayyim رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ said: The Prophet ﷺ forbade praying when the sun is rising and setting. The wisdom behind that is that these are times when the polytheists prostrate to the sun. The prohibition on praying to Allah at that time was to prevent an outward resemblance that could be a means that would lead to resembling them in intention too, even though that is very unlikely – so how about cases when that is not unlikely?

Another means that may lead to shirk is ruqyah that is not in accordance with Islamic teachings:

The basic principle regarding ruqyah is that it should be done reciting words from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ said: **«There is nothing wrong with ruqyah so long as it does not involve shirk.»** Narrated by Muslim.

It is not permissible to do ruqyah that involves shirk or seeking the help of charlatans, practitioners of magic (sihr) or soothsayers, or that involves illegible writing and the like. It was narrated that Zaynab, the wife of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا, said: An old woman used to come to us and recite incantations (ruqyah) for healing from erysipelas (which causes swelling and redness). We had a high couch, and when Abdullah came in, he would clear his throat and make noise. He came in one day, and when [that old woman] heard his voice, she hid away from him. He came and sat down next to me and touched me, and noticed a thread there. He said: What is this?

She said: I had ruqyah recited over it for healing from erysipelas. He pulled it off and broke it, then he threw it away and said: The family of Abdullah no longer has any need of shirk. I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **«Incantations (ruqyah), amulets and love charms are shirk.»**

I said: I went out one day, and So and So looked at me. My eye that was closest to him began to water, but when I recited an incantation for it, it stopped watering, but when I left it, it began to water again.

He said: That is from the Shaytan; if you obey him, he will leave you alone, but if you disobey him, he pokes his finger in your eye.

But if you do what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did, it will be better for you and it will be more likely that your eye will be healed. Sprinkle water in your eye and say: **«Adhhib il-ba's Rabb an-nas, ishfi anta ash-Shafi – laa shifa'a illa shifa'uka – shifa'an laa yughadiru saqaman (Take away the sickness, O Lord of mankind, and grant healing, for You are the Healer – there is no healing but Your healing – a healing that leaves no trace of sickness).»** Narrated by Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

Conditions of permissible ruqyah

The scholars are unanimously agreed that ruqyah is permissible if it meets three conditions:

1. **That it is done reciting the words of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ or mentioning His names and attributes.**
2. **That it should be done in Arabic, or in words of which the meaning is known.**
3. **That the individual should believe that ruqyah has no effect in and of itself; rather it is by the will of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.**

Minor shirk:

This refers to anything that may be a means that leads to major shirk. Islam forbids it and calls it shirk, but it does not nullify Tawhid altogether; rather it undermines it and weakens it.

Categories of minor shirk:

Minor shirk is divided into two categories: obvious and hidden.

The first category: Obvious shirk. This is further divided into two kinds: words and deeds.

The first kind: Words (verbal shirk): such as swearing by someone or something other than Allah, and saying "Whatever Allah wills and you will" and the like.

1. **Swearing by someone or something other than Allah,** such as swearing by the Prophet, or by a wali ("saint"), or by the honour, or by the life of one's father or mother. This is minor shirk, because the Prophet ﷺ said, as was narrated by Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما: **«Whoever swears by anyone or anything other than Allah has associated something with Him.»** Narrated by Abu Dawud; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه said: "To swear by Allah falsely is dearer to me than swearing by anything other than Allah truthfully."

That is because swearing by something other than Allah is shirk, whereas swearing by Allah falsely is a major sin, and it is well-known that shirk is worse than a major sin.

In as-Sahihayn it is narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **«Whoever swears an oath and says in his oath: 'By al-Lat and al-Uzza,' let him say: 'Laa ilaaha illa Allah (there is no god worthy of worship except Allah)'.»**

There is scholarly consensus that it is not permissible to swear by anything or anyone other than Allah. What is required of every Muslim is to beware of doing that.

It is regarded as minor shirk provided that the one who is swearing the oath does not venerate the one by whom he is swearing the oath as he venerates Allah, or more than that, as some of the Sufis do with their shaykhs, whereby one of them may swear by Allah falsely, and be more afraid of swearing by his shaykh falsely.

In that case, it constitutes major shirk.

2. Saying, "Whatever Allah wills and you will" or "Were it not for Allah and you" or "This is from Allah and from you." Or "This is by Allah's blessings and your blessings" and so on.

It was narrated from Ahmad and Abu Dawud, and classed as sahih by al-Albani, from the hadith of Hudhayfah رضي الله عنه, that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: **«Do not say, 'Whatever Allah wills and So and So wills.' Rather say: 'Whatever Allah wills and then So and So wills.»**

Some people say "The fates decided" or "Circumstances decided" that such and such should happen.

This is not permissible, because circumstances and fates cannot decide anything. Rather everything is in the Hand of Allah عز وجل and is decided by Him according to His will and decree.

The second kind: Shirk in the form of actions, such as wearing or hanging up amulets, superstition, astrology, and consulting soothsayers and fortunetellers.

1. **Wearing or hanging up amulets:**

The Arabic word tama'im (sing. tamimah) refers to items made of beads, leather, thread or wool that are put on children or in houses, or in cars, to ward off harm or the evil eye.

This action constitutes minor shirk if the doer believes that this action is no more than a cause of warding off the evil eye or harm in general, as the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, in the hadith narrated by Uqbah ibn Aamir al-Juhani رضي الله عنه: **«Whoever wears or hangs up an amulet has associated something with Allah (shirk).»** Narrated by Ahmad with a sahih isnad.

It was narrated that Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه said: I heard the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم say: **«Incantations (ruqyah), amulets and love charms are shirk.»** Narrated by Ahmad and Abu Dawud; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

But if he believes that the item in and of itself has the power to ward off or relieve calamity, then this is major shirk.

2 **Superstition and bad omens,** which means thinking that something bad is going to happen ("bad luck") **if you see, come to know of** or **hear something in particular**.

Love charms are things that some women make to endear themselves to their husbands.

Example of things that are seen: superstitions connected to birds, **such as owls or crows;** hence superstition (belief in bad omens) is called in Arabic tatayyur, from the word tayr (bird).

- There are also superstitions connected to some animals, **such as black cats;**
- or to some people, as **the disbelieving nations believed with regard to their prophets,** such as when the people of Salih عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ regarded their prophet as a bad omen. Allah tells us of this in His Noble Book, as they said to Salih: *{They said, "We consider you a bad omen, you and those with you"}* [an-Naml 27:47]. There are also some superstitions connected to seeing people with certain disabilities.

An example of superstitions connected to coming to know something in particular is superstitions connected to numbers, such as the number thirteen, or to some days or months, or some years, such as superstitions connected to the month of Safar among the people of the Jahiliyyah (before Islam).

An example of superstitions connected to things that are heard is superstitions connected to hearing certain words, such as, "You loser" or "You failure" or "You have lost" and similar phrases.

Modern superstitions include:

Regarding it as bad luck to turn shoes upside down, or leave scissors open, or to see a particular person; or regarding a particular garment or colour as unlucky, such as regarding the colour black as unlucky in general.

All of these superstitions and beliefs in bad omens come under the heading of minor shirk, as the Prophet ﷺ said, in the hadith narrated by Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه: **«Tiyarah (superstitious belief in bird omens) is shirk»** – he said it three times. Narrated by Abu Dawud and by at-Tirmidhi, who classed it as sahih.

And the Prophet ﷺ said: **«Whoever lets superstition turn him away from doing something has associated something with Allah (shirk).» They said: What is the expiation for that? He said: «To say: O Allah, there is no good except Your good, no decree except Your decree, and no god except You.»** Narrated by Ahmad; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

It is minor shirk if the person believes that the thing that he regards as a bad omen is no more than a cause of something bad taking place.

However, if he believes that that thing in and of itself has the power to bring about something bad, then this constitutes major shirk that puts him beyond the bounds of Islam.

3 Going to fortunetellers, soothsayers and their ilk.

In Arabic, **the word kahin** (translated here as fortuneteller) refers to the one who claims to have knowledge of the future, and **the word arraaf** (translated here as soothsayer) refers to the one who claims to have knowledge of the past.

Astrology (tanjeem) refers to reaching conclusions about what will happen on earth by observing the movements of heavenly bodies, and how they meet and part, rise and set, and become near to or far from one another. This comes under the heading of claiming to have knowledge of the unseen, which Allah عز وجل has declared to be false.

The term charlatanry (dajal) includes all of the above.

Moreover, you should realize that if a person goes to a soothsayer, fortune teller, astrologer or charlatan, one of the following three scenarios must apply:

1. He asks him questions but does not believe him. In this case, his prayers will not be accepted for forty days, because of what is proven in Sahih Muslim, that the Prophet ﷺ said: **«Whoever goes to a fortune teller and asks him about anything, no prayer will be accepted from him for forty days.»**
2. He asks him questions and believes what he says. This constitutes major disbelief (kufr). The Prophet ﷺ said: **«Whoever goes to a soothsayer or fortuneteller, and believes what he says, has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad ﷺ.»** Narrated by Ahmad, Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

That includes palm reading, examining the dregs of coffee cups, geomancy, and believing in the zodiac and stars (astrology).

This applies whether one goes to a fortune teller and the like in person, or watches that on television or listens to it over the phone.

If you believe that this person has knowledge of the unseen in an absolute sense, which no one knows except Allah, then this is more serious.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him}* [al-An'am 6:59], *{Say, "None in the heavens and earth knows the unseen except Allah"}* [an-Naml 27:65].

3. Going to the fortuneteller to expose his real nature to people, and to demonstrate that this is cheating and misguidance, or to denounce his actions. This is prescribed and the one who does that will be rewarded for it. In fact it may be obligatory, if one is able to do it.

The second category of minor shirk is **hidden shirk.** This is associating others with Allah in one's aims, intentions and objectives. It is of two types:

- **The first type is showing off,** such as when a person does a deed that should be done as a means of drawing closer to Allah, intending thereby to earn people's praise for doing it, such as making one's prayer look good or giving in charity so that people will praise him and speak highly of him.

It was narrated that Mahmoud ibn Labeed رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Indeed what I fear most for you is minor shirk.»** They said: O Messenger of Allah, what is minor shirk? He said: **«Showing off. Indeed Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ will say on the Day when people are requited for their deeds: Go to those to whom you showed off with your good deeds in the first world, and see whether you find any reward with them!»** Narrated by Ahmad; classed as sahih by al-Arna'ut.

The difference between showing off and seeking a reputation:

- The word riya (showing off) refers to that which may be seen or visible actions, such as prayer, giving charity, Hajj and jihad.
- The word sum'ah (seeking a reputation) refers to that which may be heard or audible actions, such as reciting Quran, preaching and dhikr.

The second type is seeking worldly gain by one's good deeds. This means seeking, by doing an action which should be done for the sake of Allah, some worldly gain. This is associating others with Allah in one's intentions and objectives, and it is contrary to perfect Tawhid.

That includes doing righteous deeds for the sake of transient worldly whims and desires, such as one who does Hajj, gives the adhan, leads the people in prayer, or teaches Islamic knowledge, for the sake of wealth or status.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Whoever desires the life of this world and its adornments - We fully repay them for their deeds therein, and they therein will not be deprived, those are the ones for whom there is not in the Hereafter but the Fire. And lost is what they did therein, and worthless is what they used to do}* [Hud 11:15-16].

The Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Wretched is the slave of the dinar and the slave of the dirham and the slave of the khameesah (a kind of luxurious garment made of wool with patterns). If he is given he is pleased and if he is not given he becomes discontent. May he be wretched and doomed, and if he is pricked with a thorn may it not be pulled out (that is, may he have no help to remove it).»** Narrated by al-Bukhari.

The difference between seeking worldly gain by one's good deeds and showing off is that the showoff only does the action for the purpose of earning praise, whereas the one who seeks worldly gain through his action strives for what he can gain thereby, such as wealth or status.

Minor shirk becomes major shirk in two cases:

1. If it is accompanied by belief in the heart, namely veneration of something other than Allah that he venerates as he should venerate Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, such as swearing by something that he venerates as he should venerate Allah. This has been noted above.

2. If it affects the foundation of faith itself, or the shirk is so great that it has an impact on the individual, as in the case of one who shows off and pretends to be a believer, or for whom showing off dominates most of his deeds, or the motive for his deeds is primarily the pursuit of worldly gains, to the extent that he does not seek the pleasure of Allah thereby.

Expiation of swearing by something other than Allah:

The expiation for that is to say Laa ilaaha illa Allah, because of the hadith of Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, according to which the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Whoever swears an oath and says in his oath: 'By al-Lat and al-Uzza,' let him say: 'Laa ilaaha illa Allah (there is no god worthy of worship except Allah)'.»** Agreed upon.

Expiation for superstition and belief in bad omens:

We have quoted above the hadith: **«Whoever lets superstition turn him away from doing something has associated something with Allah (shirk).»** They said: What is the expiation for that? He said: **«To say: O Allah, there is no good except Your good, no decree except Your decree, and no god except You.»**

The difference between kufr (disbelief) and shirk:

In terms of a person's ultimate fate, there is no difference between the kafir (disbeliever) and the mushrik (one who associates others with Allah) in the sense of major shirk; both of them will abide forever in the Fire.

Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed, they who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture and the polytheists will be in the fire of Hell, abiding eternally therein. Those are the worst of creatures}* [al-Bayinah 98:6].

But the scholars use the term shirk to refer to the one who devotes to anyone other than Allah that which should be devoted only to Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ, or he devotes it both to Allah and to someone else, such as acts of worship. Such a person is a mushrik, such as one who seeks the help of someone other than Allah, or offers a sacrifice or makes a vow to someone other than Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

The one who does something that is contrary to faith, whether in terms of beliefs, words or deeds that the Lawgiver has deemed to be contrary to faith, or who denies something that is clearly established in Islamic teachings and is well-known to be part of faith – such as denying that prayer and zakat are obligatory, or that zina and drinking alcohol are haram – is a kafir (disbeliever).

To sum up: kufr is broader than shirk, so every mushrik is a kafir but not every kafir is a mushrik.

This is shirk of both types, minor and major.

What is required of the Muslim is to be aware of the oneness of Allah (Tawhid) and what will bring him closer to Him. One of the most significant causes of the spread of shirk among the Muslims is ignorance of what is required of affirming the oneness of Allah. The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was keen to explain pure Tawhid and to explain shirk, and put an end to the causes that lead to it.

Activities

1. Write a brief essay about the ruling on building structures over graves and taking them as places of worship. Support what you say with evidence.

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2. Islam emphatically warns against venerating graves. Quote the evidence that supports that.

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3. What is the guideline on what constitutes minor shirk? What is the ruling on swearing by something or someone other than Allah? When does that constitute major shirk?

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4. Write an essay about superstition and why believing in bad omens constitutes minor shirk? When does it constitute major shirk?

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5. What is meant by hidden minor shirk? What are the types thereof?

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5

Tawassul (means of drawing close to Allah) and the categories thereof

In this unit we will study

- Tawassul (means of drawing close to Allah)
- Tawassul that is prescribed in Islamic teachings
- Tawassul that is not prescribed
- Types of tawassul

Tawassul and the categories thereof

Tawassul (means of drawing close to Allah) is one of the topics that are connected to what we have discussed above in the chapters on shirk and disbelief (kufr). Hence it is worthwhile to study and learn about its categories, and what is prescribed in this regard and what is not prescribed.

The meaning of tawassul:

In linguistic terms, tawassul means drawing close to what one seeks and being eager to attain it.

Ibn al-Atheer said: The wasil is the seeker, one who is eager. Waseelah (pl. wasa'il) is what brings one closer and is the means that helps one to reach a thing and get closer to it.

Related words are used to describe a person doing a deed that brings him closer to Allah.

In Islamic teachings, tawassul means drawing close to Allah by means of that which pleases Him عَزَّوَجَلَّ, by doing righteous deeds and acts of worship, seeking to comply with the teachings of Islam. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{O you who have believed, fear Allah and seek the means (waseelah) [of nearness] to Him}* [al-Ma'idah 5:35].

Qatadah said: That is, draw close to Him by obeying Him and striving to do that which pleases Him.

And Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Those whom they invoke seek means of access (waseelah) to their Lord, [striving as to] which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared}* [al-Isra 17:57].

Categories of tawassul:

That which is prescribed

- Seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of His names.
- Seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of faith and righteous deeds.
- Seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of Tawhid.
- Seeking to draw close to Allah by expressing one's weakness.
- Seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the supplication of the righteous who are still living.
- Seeking to draw close to Allah by confessing sins.

That which is not prescribed

- Seeking to draw close to Allah by asking the dead to intercede.
- Seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the standing of the Prophet ﷺ.
- Seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of created beings.

Categories of tawassul:

There are two categories of tawassul: that which is prescribed and that which is forbidden.

The first category: tawassul that is prescribed, which is of several types:

1. **Seeking to draw close to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ by virtue of His names and attributes,** as Allah has enjoined in the verse: *{And to Allah belong the best names, so invoke Him by them}* [al-A'raf 7:180].
2. **Seeking to draw close to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and ask for His help by virtue of faith and righteous deeds done by the one who is seeking to draw close to Him,** as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ tells us that the people of faith say: *{Our Lord, indeed we have heard a caller calling to faith, [saying], 'Believe in your Lord,' and we have believed. Our Lord, so forgive us our sins and remove from us our misdeeds and cause us to die with the righteous}* [Aal Imran 3:193].

This is also seen in the hadith about the three men who became trapped in the cave when the rock fell and blocked the mouth of the cave, and they could not get out. They turned to Allah, seeking His help by virtue of their righteous deeds, and Allah granted them relief, so that they were able to walk out of the cave. This hadith was narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

3. **Seeking to draw close to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and ask** for His help by virtue of affirming His oneness Tawhid, as Yunus عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did: *{And [mention] the man of the fish, when he went off in anger and thought that We would not decree [anything] upon him. And he called out within the darknesses, "There is no god worthy of worship except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers." So We responded to him and saved him from the distress. And thus do We save the believers}* [al-Anbiya 21:87-88].

4. **Seeking to draw close to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and ask** for His help by expressing one's weakness and need for Him, as Ayub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said: *{Indeed, adversity has touched me, and you are the Most Merciful of the merciful}* [al-Anbiya 21:83].

5. **Seeking to draw close to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and ask** for His help through the supplication of the righteous who are still living, as the Sahabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ did when there was a drought, and they would ask the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to pray to Allah for them. After he died, they would ask his paternal uncle al-Abbas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to pray for them.

6. **Seeking to draw close to Allah by admitting sins,** as Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said: *{"My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, so forgive me," and He forgave him. Indeed, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful}* [al-Qasas 28:16]. and Yunus عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said: *{Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers}* [al-Anbiya 21:87].

The second category: tawassul that is not prescribed:

This refers to a person seeking to draw close to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ by means of that which is not proven to be a valid means of doing so in the Quran and Sunnah.

The basic principle concerning tawassul is that it is limited to what is proven in the Quran and Sunnah. So no one should seek to draw close to Allah except by means of that which is in accordance with the evidence from the Quran and Sunnah.

The types of impermissible tawassul are as follows:

1 Seeking help by calling upon the dead and seeking their intercession.

It is not permissible to seek the supplication or intercession of one who is dead, especially at his grave, because that creates more hope in and attachment to him. This is a reprehensible innovation and a means that leads to shirk and asking of someone other than Allah, and the matter may go as far as major shirk that puts one beyond the bounds of Islam. This happens a great deal among these people because they are so attached to the dead person.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{That is Allah, your Lord; to Him belongs sovereignty. And those whom you invoke other than Him do not possess [as much as] the membrane of a date seed. If you invoke them, they do not hear your supplication; and if they heard, they would not respond to you. And on the Day of Resurrection they will deny your association. And none can inform you like [one] Acquainted [with all matters]}* [Fatir 35:13], *{And who is more astray than he who invokes besides Allah those who will not respond to him until the Day of Resurrection, and they, of their invocation, are unaware. And when the people are gathered [that Day], they [who were invoked] will be enemies to them, and they will be deniers of their worship}* [al-Ahqaf 46:5-6].

It was narrated from Anas ibn Malik رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ that when there was a drought, Umar ibn al-Khattab رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ would seek rain by virtue of [the supplication of] al-Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, saying: "O Allah, we used to seek Your help by virtue of [the supplication of] our Prophet and You would grant us rain. Now we seek Your help by virtue of [the supplication of] the paternal uncle of our Prophet, so grant us rain," and they would be granted rain. Narrated by al-Bukhari.

If seeking intercession and tawassul by virtue of the dead were permissible, the Sahabah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ would not have turned away from tawassul by virtue of the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and sought rain through tawassul by virtue of [the supplication of] al-Abbas رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ instead.

Shaykh al-Islam said: It was narrated that Abdullah ibn Dinar said: I saw Abdullah ibn Umar standing at the grave of the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, sending blessings upon the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and praying for Abu Bakr and Umar. It was also narrated that Anas ibn Malik and others would send salam upon the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, **then when they wanted to offer supplication (dua), they would turn to face towards the qiblah and call upon Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ; they would not offer supplication facing towards the chamber [in which the Prophet's grave is]. … The view of the four imams – Malik, Abu Hanifah, ash-Shafi'i and Ahmad – and other leading scholars of Islam is that if a man has sent salams on the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ [at his grave] and wants to offer supplication for himself, he should turn to face towards the qiblah.**

2 Seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the standing (jah) of the Prophet ﷺ:

Seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the standing (jah) of the Prophet ﷺ is an innovation in supplication, and is not permissible because of the following evidence.

1 The Sahabah رضي الله عنهم did not seek to draw close to Allah by virtue of the standing of the Prophet ﷺ, even though they venerated him so much and were well aware of his status, and they reached the highest level of love for him ﷺ. If this was prescribed, the first of all people to do that would have been the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم, who were the most knowledgeable of the standing (jah) of Muhammad ﷺ.

2 Tawassul (seeking to draw close to Allah) is supplication and worship, and the basic principle concerning acts of worship is that they are not allowed unless there is proof that indicates that they are prescribed and permissible.

3 This is seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the good deeds of someone else. That is because status and standing (jah) are only attained by a person's own efforts, and the efforts of someone else belong to that other person alone. Therefore if someone seeks to draw close to Allah by virtue of another person's good deeds, he is asking by virtue of something that is not his, and Allah عز وجل says: *{And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives}* [an-Najm 53:39].

Tawassul (seeking to draw close to Allah) can only be done through one's supplication, or one's righteous deeds, or by refraining from sin. It cannot be done by virtue of someone else's status or essence, or by virtue of something intangible, such as high standing and the like.

With regard to the hadith in which it says, "If you ask of Allah, then ask of Him by my standing (jahi), for my standing before Allah is great," this is a fabricated hadith which does not appear in any of the reliable books of Sunnah.

It is permissible for a person to seek to draw close to Allah by virtue of his obedience to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his following him. This comes under the heading of seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of one's righteous deeds.

3 Seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the essence (dhat) of created beings

Such as when a person asks his Lord to meet his need, urging Him عَزَّوَجَلَّ by virtue of His Prophet, or of His close friend (wali), or by the right of His Prophet, or by the right of His close friend, and so on.

One example of that is when the person who seeks to draw close to Allah says: "O Allah, I ask of You by virtue of Your Prophet – not meaning anything but his essence (dhat) – to grant me such and such, or to ward off from me such and such."

Or he says: "O Allah, I ask You for such and such by virtue of Your close friend (wali) So and So, or by the right of Your Prophet So and So."

Or he says: "O Allah, I urge You by virtue of So and So to meet my need."

The ruling on this type of tawassul is that it is haram (prohibited). The evidence for that is as follows:

1. There is no evidence to suggest that it is prescribed. The Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Whoever does an action that is not in accordance with this matter of ours, it will be rejected.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari.

2. It is a means that leads to shirk, and may go as far as major shirk, if the one who does this believes that the one by virtue of whom he is seeking to draw close to Allah has any power to benefit or harm besides Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

3. Asking by the right of So and So implies that the created being has a right over the Creator, but no one has any right over Allah and nothing is incumbent upon Him except that which He has made incumbent upon Himself عَزَّوَجَلَّ in His promise, which is true.

Activities

1. Give a definition of tawassul in linguistic terms and in Islamic terminology. How do the innovators quote Quran to suggest that seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the awliya and the righteous is prescribed and permissible? How would you respond to their specious argument?

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2. What is the tawassul that is prescribed in Islam? Why is seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the standing of the Prophet ﷺ prohibited?

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3. How do you understand from the fact that the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم sought to draw close to Allah by virtue of [the supplication of] al-Abbas رضي الله عنه that seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the dead is prohibited?

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4. One of the types of tawassul is seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the essence of created beings. Write down the evidence for the prohibition on this type of tawassul.

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6

Contemporary atheism

In this unit we will study

- Contemporary atheism
- Meaning of atheism in the modern sense
- Reasons for the emergence and spread of atheism
- Most significant ideas and beliefs
- Types of atheists
- Foundations of atheism
- The most significant specious argument of atheism is denial of the existence of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ – and the refutation thereof
- Ways of protecting against atheism

Contemporary atheism

Atheism – meaning denial of the Creator – is a sickness in the heart, spiritual blindness and disordered thinking, and it is contrary to sound human nature. Hence no person of sound mind and sound nature – let alone any nation of sound mind and sound nature – is affected by it.

Atheism was not a widespread phenomenon in any historical period, and was never the prevalent belief of any previous nation. Rather atheists, or people who denied the existence of God, were a few, odd individuals.

The disbelief of nations in past eras was limited to two things:

1. Association of others (shirk) with Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and the worship of others besides Him.
2. Ignorance of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and what is and is not befitting for Him of attributes, such as believing that He has a son or consort, or that He does not see and hear everything, or that He is like created beings, or that He can be incarnated or immanent in any created thing.

All of these beliefs were held alongside affirmation of the existence of a Lord, Creator and Provider Who controlled all things: *{Say, "Who provides for you from the heaven and the earth? Or who controls hearing and sight and who brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living and who arranges [every] matter?" They will say, "Allah," so say, "Then will you not fear Him?"}* [Yunus 10:31].

As for believing that there is no God of this universe at all, this is a weird and misguided notion that no nation in human history ever proclaimed, except some societies in the modern era, but even then, not all of their people agreed with that.

Definition of atheism (ilhad)

In linguistic terms, the Arabic word ilhad (translated here as atheism) means drifting away from what is right. The verb alhada refers to deviating or drifting away from the path of truth and faith.

The lahd (niche in a grave) is so called because it is at one of the two sides of the grave.

The meaning in Islamic terminology is similar. Ilhad (atheism; heresy) is a deviation from the path of truth towards falsehood.

What is meant by atheism in the modern sense:

Atheism is a school of philosophical thought based on the idea of nihilism, the core principle of which is denial of the existence of God the Creator عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

Therefore the atheists claim that this universe came into existence without any Creator, and that matter exists from eternity to eternity; there was never a time in the past when it did not exist, so it is both creator and created at the same time.

Reasons for the emergence and spread of atheism

There are specific, local reasons for the emergence of atheism in the Western world, and it was only transferred to Muslim societies via intellectual invasion (cultural imperialism), and because of the Muslims' imitation of what they thought was science, knowledge and civilization. The main reasons for that are:

1. **Europe never had sound belief or true religion; rather the Europeans went from one form of ignorance to another.** The religion from which Europe drifted away was not the religion of Allah; rather it was Christianity, which was fabricated by Paul and those who came after him. It is a religion that is filled with myths that no sound mind or sound human nature can accept, such as the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and his crucifixion, along with the myths of original sin, salvation and the sacred mysteries.

It was obligatory for the Christian to believe in these myths, without objecting or thinking, as the slogan of Christianity was always "Believe first and think second."

This is as far as belief is concerned.

In terms of worship, we find that Christianity imposed, in Europe and elsewhere, **monasticism**, which is a path that is contrary to human nature.

Undoubtedly rebelling against this deviant religion is something dictated by sound thinking.

But the issue is: what is the alternative? The alternative is not atheism; rather the alternative is believing in the true and sound religion (Islam).

2. **The oppression of the clergy.** The clergy made themselves lords of the Christians, prescribing for them whatever they wished, imposing taxes on them and seeking to control their minds and faith by acting as intermediaries between them and God. They obliged the people to confess their sins to them and seek forgiveness through them, and other things with which European history abounds.

3. **The Age of Enlightenment.** Once Europe began to move in the direction of discovery and scientific research, a great battle ensued between astronomers and natural scientists and the clergy who launched a vicious war against them, for two reasons:

a. The scientific method was adopted from the Muslims

b. It contradicted what they had introduced into the Scriptures of false notions about the universe and history.

With the passage of time, the soundness of scientific facts was confirmed and the myths propagated by the church were proven to be false, but some proponents of science attacked religion as a whole, including Islam.

Most significant ideas and beliefs:

- Denying the existence of God – exalted is Allah far above what they say.
- The idea that the universe, human beings, animals and plants came into existence spontaneously, and that there is no life after death.
- The idea that matter exists from eternity to eternity; there was never a time in the past when it did not exist, so it is both creator and created at the same time.
- Not acknowledging moral concepts, truth, justice, sublime aims, or the soul.

Types of atheists:

- Those who deny the existence of the Creator altogether, such as Pharaoh, whom Allah tells us that he said: *{And what is the Lord of the worlds?}* [ash-Shu'ara 26:23].
- Those who think that belief in God is a kind of fairytale.
- Those who say: **We do not know whether there is a Creator or not.**
- Those who think that there is a Creator of the universe, but He ceased to exist after creating all things.
- Also included under the heading of atheism are those who think that there is a God, but He has nothing to do with people's lives. This is the kind of secularism that is widespread in Europe and the West, and even the Muslim world is not free from it.

Secularism is synonymous with atheism. Gillian Fowler says: "The secularist is generally an atheist, who does not believe in any God… The secularists emphatically reject any involvement of God in their lives, to the extent that one of them says, addressing God" – and how bad is what he says –: "Take Your hand off the universe!"

This type of atheism is the worst, because it causes so much confusion for people, and many of the ignorant fall into it.

The most significant foundations of atheism:

Atheist thought is founded on one main idea:

that idea is the scientific theories which they claim support the idea that there is no Creator. These theories are of two types:

1 **The first type is theories that are sound in and of themselves,** but they do not support the idea that there is no God, as the atheists claim. Rather it is the opposite; these theories testify to the existence of God, the All-Wise Creator and Controller, and are indicative of His oneness.

One of these theories is the mechanistic view of the universe.

This view says that it is possible to explain natural phenomena by connecting them to one another, without any need for the intervention of an exterior force.

The response to that is that the interconnectedness of the universe, through gravity or other natural laws, is undoubtedly something that is correct, but it offers definitive proof that there is an all-knowing, Almighty Creator Who has caused this universe to operate on the basis of these precise laws, and it does not indicate the opposite. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And a sign for them is the night. We remove from it [the light of] day, so they are [left] in darkness and the sun runs [on course] toward its stopping point. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing, and the moon – We have determined for it phases, until it returns [appearing] like the old date stalk. It is not allowable for the sun to reach the moon, nor does the night overtake the day, but each, in an orbit, is swimming}* [Ya-Seen 36:37-40].

The primitive Bedouin had better reasoning than the proponents of this theory. When it was said to him: How do you know about your Lord?

He said: The dung indicates that a camel passed by and footprints indicate that a human passed through; so how can the sky with its big stars, and the earth with its mountains and valleys, not be indicative of the Most High, the Most Great?

2 The second type is false theories:

One of these theories is Darwin's theory of evolution, which is based on the law of natural selection and the survival of the fittest. This theory suggests that the true ancestor of man was a tiny amoeba that lived in a stagnant swamp millions of years ago. Then it evolved and developed, and the monkey was one of the stages of evolution which ultimately led to the emergence of humanity!

The response to that:

1. This theory is flawed, because it does not explain all the natural phenomena of life. It does not give any explanation as to how insects developed, even though they represent eighty percent of all animal species. Did insects develop, or did they remain as they were? Why do the laws of evolution not apply to them?

2. How could life suddenly move from a stagnant cell to living beings with feelings and reason?

Can this theory explain how come the foetus in the mother's womb trains for the only skill required of it – namely suckling the mother's breast – by sucking its fingers in the womb?

Moreover, this theory cannot explain the echolocation of bats, the infrared detection of rattlesnakes, or the amazing abilities of mosquitoes. What the proponents of this theory claim, that creatures developed by themselves and by the action of matter, is nothing but foolish myths. If that were true, then evolution would lead to an atom becoming a camel or huge elephant; what is there to prevent that, when the law of evolution permits it?

But millions of years have passed,

and an atom is still an atom,

and a camel is still a camel!

Man is man, and did not evolve from monkey to human, except according to the atheist Darwin, whose theory has become a laughingstock for people of reason.

The sound and correct evolution is that both humans and animals start out small, then they grow little by little until they attain perfection. This is something real that can be observed, and it indicates that there is a supreme power that is taking care of them and watching over them until they reach perfection. That supreme power is Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ; the matter is not as they claim.

The most significant specious arguments used by the atheists to deny the existence of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and the refutation thereof

Antony Flew

He was a famous British professor in the field of thought, philosophy and atheism, one of the most prominent atheists of the twentieth century. His many writings were seminal works for atheists throughout the second half of the twentieth century, but in 2004 CE he stunned the world when, having reached his eighties, he became a believer in the existence of God.

Flew was met with insults, mockery and scorn on the part of atheists, despite the fact that they knew full well that he was a man of great reason and deep thinking.

He decided to write a book describing his journey from believing boy to atheist man to an old man in his eighties who believed in the existence of God. This book – There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind – was published in 2007 CE.

The first specious argument:

If, for everything that exists, there is something that brought it into existence, and for every created thing there is a creator, then who created God?

Response:

Asking this question is wrong in the first place, for it leads to infinite regress. That is because if we answer this question by saying that it is such and such, then the same question will be asked about that other one, as it will be asked: Who created the other one? And so it will continue ad infinitum, or we will reach a creator who was not created, regarding whom this question cannot rationally be asked; that is Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. This conclusion is the inevitable, rational conclusion.

The reason for that is that this universe came into existence after having not existed, so there must be one who brought it into existence, so who is the one who brought it into existence? For it is usually impossible for something to come into existence without one who brings it into existence.

This life in living created beings is indicative of a creator who created it, so who is it that gave them life?

For Your Information

This power of reasoning in rational created beings is indicative of a creator who created it, so who is it that gave them the power of reasoning?

This wisdom that exists in wise created beings is indicative of a creator who created it, so who is it that gave them wisdom?

The faculties of hearing and seeing in created beings is indicative of a creator who created them, so who is it that gave them these faculties of hearing and seeing?

The ability to laugh and weep in created beings that laugh and weep is indicative of a creator who created it, so who is it that gave this ability to these created beings?

If we examine the Holy Quran that we have before us, and compare it to human speech, we will affirm – beyond any shadow of a doubt – that it is not human speech, and that the unlettered Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who could neither read nor write, could not have produced it by himself; in fact, it is impossible that he could have done that.

Then he presented it to the entire world, asking all of humanity to find even one mistake or contradiction in it. For more than fourteen hundred years, the entire world has been utterly unable to meet this challenge; rather the entire world testifies to the Quran's virtue.

Furthermore, the Quran contains stories of the past, rulings, legislation and scientific miracles; the book itself is a linguistic, rhetorical and literary miracle, as there is no way that a human being – either Prophet Muhammad ﷺ or anyone else – could have produced it.

If there is no God, then who could have sent down this Book and sent Muhammad ﷺ with it?

Who supported and helped the previous Prophets عليهم السلام with tangible miracles that their people saw and could not deny?

Who has the power to turn all the water into blood, or the seas into huge mountains? Who is able to send plagues of frogs and lice, and floods, then cause all that to be taken away by virtue of the supplication of the Prophet Musa عليه الصلاة والسلام and his turning to Allah عز وجل?

Who has the power to cause an infant boy in the cradle to speak and say: *{Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet}* [Maryam 19:30]?

Who, after that, gave him the power to bring the dead back to life and to heal those born blind and the lepers?

Who took Muhammad ﷺ by night [from Makkah to Jerusalem], and caused the moon to split for him before the eyes of the people?

Who answers supplication when someone calls upon Him with sincerity at the time of extreme need?

Why is it that the natural inclination of humans is to turn to their Creator without anyone directing them to do so? Why do humans instinctively call upon God and not deny Him, except those who are arrogant?

What is this amazing self-assurance that a believer attains when he persists in prayer, fasting and giving zakat? What is this peace of mind that a person has when he turns sincerely to Allah, calls upon Him and affirms His oneness?

Such is Allah, the One, the Unique, Who is sought by all. He begets not nor was He begotten, and there is none comparable to Him.

The second specious argument:

They say that reason is incapable of imagining this God and His true nature, and if reason is unable to comprehend and imagine something, this proves that it does not exist.

Response:

The first part of this argument is undoubtedly true: all people are incapable of knowing the true nature and essence of Almighty God. Hence it was said: "Whatever crosses your mind, Allah is different to that." *{There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing}* [ash-Shura 42:11].

But the second part of this argument is not true. It is not true that if human minds are unable to understand the essence of a thing, this indicates that it does not exist, otherwise reason would have to deny many of the secrets of this universe, because of its inability to understand their reality and essence.

Scientists are unable to understand the essence of the matter which is before them, although they see it with their own eyes, taste it with their own tongues and smell it with their own noses, and they use it in various ways in day-to-day life. Does this inability to understand its essence mean that it does not exist? If this is the case with regard to knowing the essence of things that are closest to man, then how could man hope to learn the true essence of God through his reasoning?

Can man – who does not know how he understands things or how he thinks, or how his own brain functions – hope to understand the reality of God?

This inability to imagine the nature or essence of God does not mean that it is impossible for Him to exist.

Rather it is sufficient for rational-thinking people to conclude that God exists on the basis of what he sees of the systems, precision and perfection in this universe.

Roger Bacon, a prominent philosopher, said: There is no natural scientist who can learn everything about the true nature of one fly and its characteristics, let alone understand the nature and essence of God.

The most common form of atheism is atheism motivated by self-interest. A person may embrace atheism, thinking that he will free himself of religious restraints and limits imposed by faith, and live an aimless life with no one watching over him or keeping account of what he does. Thus he will be able to do whatever he wants and indulge in physical pleasures without being suppressed by religion or experiencing feelings of guilt. This is what Richard Dawkins summed up when he said: "There's probably no god. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life." Yet despite that, today – even after getting rid of all religious restrictions – the highest rate of suicide occurs among atheists.

Means of protection against atheism

There are many means of protecting society against the danger of atheism. The most important of these means include the following:

1. **Reading and reflecting upon the Quran,** for the Quran is sufficient and offers healing. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And is it not sufficient for them that We revealed to you the Book which is recited to them? Indeed in that is a mercy and reminder for a people who believe}* [al-Ankabut 29:51].

In the Quran there are many verses which point to the existence of the Creator and His oneness and might. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{How can you disbelieve in Allah when you were lifeless and He brought you to life; then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you [back] to life, and then to Him you will be returned?}* [al-Baqarah 2:28], *{And on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith] And in yourselves. Then will you not see?}* [adh-Dhariyat 51:20-21], *{Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves] or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain }* [at-Tur 52:35-36].

2. **Being keen to do that which will lead to faith becoming entrenched and steadfast, such as calling upon Allah in supplication (dua).** Anas ibn Malik رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ often used to say: **"Yaa muqallib al-quloob, thabbit qalbi ala deenika (O Controller of the hearts, make my heart steadfast in adherence to Your religion)."** Narrated by at-Tirmidhi; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

One of the most important means of making faith steadfast is remembering Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, as He says: *{So remember Me; I will remember you}* [al-Baqarah 2:152].

3. **Instilling sound aqeedah (creed) in the hearts of youth, children, women and all members of society,** through lessons, lectures and other means.

4 **Boycotting atheist websites, channels and programs.** The Prophet ﷺ said: **"Whoever hears of the Dajjal, let him keep away from him, for by Allah, a man may come to him, thinking himself to be a believer, then he will end up following him because of what he stirs up of doubts in his mind."** Narrated by at-Tirmidhi; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

The early generations warned of the danger of mixing with these people, and reading or listening to what they say, lest something of that take root in a weak heart and have an impact on it.

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما said: "Do not sit with those who follow whims and desires, for sitting with them sickens the heart."

Amr ibn Qays al-Mala'i said: It was said: Do not sit with a deviant person lest your heart deviate.

Activities

1. **What is meant by atheism in the modern age? What are its causes? What are its most significant ideas, in brief?**
2. **What is meant by the Darwinian theory according to the atheists? What is the response to it?**
3. **One of the most prominent specious arguments of the atheists is: "If, for everything that exists, there is something that brought it into existence, and for every created thing there is a creator, then who created God?" Give a response to that.**
4. **What is the basis on which the atheists say that they cannot imagine how something could come into existence from nothing? How would you respond to that?**

And Allah is the source of strength.

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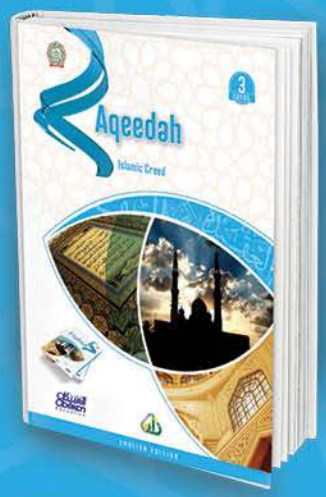

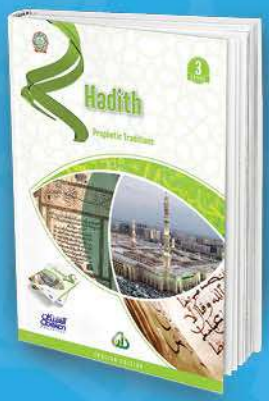

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